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Media contacts: dlitfin@aol.com, jlawrence@ntra.com, kjones@parxracing.com

NOHOLDINGBACK BEAR PREVAILS IN G3 GALLANT BOB
Cyrus Alexander Takes Frosted; Granny's Kitten Takes "Soup"

BENSALEM, Pa. (Saturday, September 24, 2016) – Despite some early traffic trouble there was no denying a determined Holdingback Bear in Saturday's Grade 3, \$300,000 Gallant Bob Stakes, the first of three graded stakes on Pennsylvania Derby–Cotillion Day at Parx Racing.

Cutting back from a gritty third in the Grade 1 King's Bishop Stakes, Noholdingback Bear was chasing Navy Hymn and Awesome Speed from close range when he was shuffled back slightly from between horses into the turn.

Noholding Back (\$8.20) recovered quickly under confident handling from Eurico Rosa Da Silva and swung four wide into the stretch to set sail for the leaders. He struck the front a furlong from home and edged clear under a mild drive as the slight favorite, reporting home by 1 ¼ lengths over late-running Mind Your Biscuits, winner of the Grade 2 Amsterdam Stakes at Saratoga Race Course.

It was another half-length back to Threefiveindia, the virtual co-favorite at 3.10 to 1, who stumbled at the start but got the show spot over Awesome Speed and Navy Hymn, who faded to fourth and fifth in the field of 11 sophomore sprinters.

Da Silva was greeted in the winner's circle with a huge bear hug from owner Danny Dion, who – fittingly enough - campaigns Noholdingback Bear under the nom de course Bear Stables.

"I got squeezed just a little bit, the horse outside me came in and closed the door," said Da Silva. "But it worked out well because my horse is very relaxed and an easy horse to ride. I just waited for the stretch and had a lot of horse all the way. He recovered very nicely, he did everything very professional. Last time, seven-eighths was not his distance, but at three-quarters I can press any horse with him."

After tracking Navy Hymn's quick pace of 22.14 and 45.29, Noholdingback Bear completed six furlongs in 1:09.61 seconds to notch his first dirt win after four previous

tallies on synthetic surfaces for trainer Michael De Paulo, including stakes scores at Presque Isle Downs and his base at Woodbine in Toronto, Canada.

“He broke pretty good and they ran away from him a little early, and Eurico sat off the pace, went a little wide and ran them down,” said De Paulo. “In the King's Bishop, seven-eighths was a little far for him – six, six and a half furlongs is perfect for him. I think right now, he is a better stronger horse. We are looking to going to the Breeders' Cup Sprint if we can.”

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The stakes action kicked off with a rousing finish in the \$100,000 Alphabet Soup Handicap, as Granny's Kitten slipped through along the rail turning for home and edged pacesetter I'll Call after a prolonged stretch battle in the 1 1/16-mile race for older Pennsylvania-bred turf runners.

Continuing a torrid run for the trainer-jockey combination of Mike Maker and Florent Geroux, Granny's Kitten stalked I'll Call and Uncle Dave from close range through the opening stages, moved closer still while hugging the rail approaching the stretch and wrested command soon after being straightened away.

Granny's Kitten, bred and owned by Ken & Sarah Ramsey, prevailed by a neck and paid \$4.80 as the favorite in a field of 10, earning \$60,000 and improving to 4-3-2 from 14 starts. The 4-year-old colt by Kitten's Joy ran 1 1/16 miles in 1:43.21 seconds over a firm turf course.

I'll Call held stubbornly to be second best by 2 ¼ lengths over last year's Alphabet Soup winner and second choice Uncle Dave, with third choice Edge of Reality two lengths farther back in fourth.

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The public choice prevailed in the \$150,000 “Frosted” honoring last year's Pennsylvania Derby winner, although Cyrus Alexander gave his many backers some anxious moments before getting up in the shadow of the wire.

Cyrus Alexander (\$5.60), a road warrior who has now run in five states through his last five starts for Hall Of Fame trainer Jerry Hollendorfer, appeared to be spinning his wheels behind early leader Res Judicata and Mr. Jordan in mid-stretch, but surged late for a head decision over War Story, who was second by a neck over third finisher Mr. Jordan in a blanket finish.

Res Judicata set measured fractions of 24.50, 48.55 and 1:12.84 seconds, with Mr. Jordan challenging for command into the lane, but Cyrus Alexander proved too much under never-say-die handling from Rafael Bejarano.

“They went a little slow in the beginning, but I tried to hold my horse as long as I can because I knew he was going to come running at the end,” said Bejarano. “The last time (second in the Longacres Mile) he had bad luck...but today, everything was perfect.”

Cyrus Alexander, a 4-year-old colt by Medaglia d'Oro who won the Grade 3 Lone Star Park Handicap in July, ran 1 1/16 miles in 1:45.27 seconds over a fast main track, and earned \$90,000 for Spendthrift Farm and Stonestreet Stables.

“I was wondering if Rafael was going to go between horses or come around,” said Hollendorfer, who ranks third all-time in victories among trainers. “I didn't think he could make it, but the horse made up a lot of ground in the last sixteenth and I'm very grateful that he did that. We wanted to get a win with him and get his confidence built up. He has won a Grade 3, and if we can ever get to a Grade 2 (or a) Grade 1 it would be good, because he is very valuable as a stallion.”